



Cuba 1987

Hansai 1997

Mon amour —

Pour ton journal cubain,
ton univers intérieur au lieu du
cosmos et, je l'espère, un ou
deux poèmes.

Avec toute ma passion
et toute mon affection,

Arlette

le 24 mai 1987

May 28, 1987 Cuba
Thursday 8³⁰ am

Havana

I was about to begin these notes yesterday morning when my phone rang. A Cuban playwright, Freddy Atilis, was in the lobby, assigned to me by the ITI here. A gaunt, rather shy fellow who wanted to know my wishes so that he could attend to them. I returned to my hotel room (# 1231) a little after 1 am, having had a rich + enjoyable day.

I was going to begin yesterday's notes by saying that this diary should begin with the letter I wrote to the morning before, i.e. Tuesday morning, in which I recounted my experiences on the flight (Cubana # 421) - delayed by

21 hours - and on arrival in Cuba.
The fortuitous encounter with the little old
Cuban lady who turned out to be a
famous (+ evidently under celebrated) playwright
+ with Estella Bravo, the American-trained-
Cuban, a documentary film maker married
to a Cuban professor of medicine (she was
just returning from some do on "truth + the
news" at the Ontario Art Gallery which
Bill Meers of the CBC, displaying the
usual standard of Canadian political
acumen, opened by saying something
like: "In Russia there is a newspaper
called 'Pravda', which means 'truth', +
another which is called 'Izvestia' which
means 'news' — + neither of them ever
contain either truth or news." At least,
that's how Estella related the words,
with chagrin. My letter also made men-
tion of my first impressions - Cuba

20 years later — the ubiquitous evidence of construction (especially housing), the absence of any sense of violence + threat in the streets at night (I took a long walk the night of my arrival, at first along the sea + then through dimly-lit streets), but also the invitation of the Latinamerican lack of organization.

On my way to monitoring the letters around 11 am Tuesday morning, I met up with Anton Wagner in the lobby. I had been told he had planned to arrive here on Sunday, but on Monday + Tuesday morning no one (at the Can. Embassy or the ITI) knew whether he had (+ they had asked me to look out for him). So there he was, all tanned + beaming, though a little lost. No one had met him at the airport either, + without speaking a word of Spanish

he had found it difficult to discover the hotel in which he was booked (he had assumed it was a cheaper hotel - the Capri, but it turned out to be the Havana Libre). Anyway, he had a little too much rum on Monday (7 hours), but when I decided to go to the beach, he joined me. I had made contact with one Cesar at the ITI who was going to call me back right away to let me know my "program". After not hearing from him for two hours, I decided to write my letters to A. + go to the beach. So Anton + I engaged a taxi which took us to La Playa de Santa Maria, about 30 km away, for US \$ 8.50.

On the way I chatted with the taxi driver + learnt that he had 5 children, lived in an apartment by the sea for which he pays 10 pesos (approx. \$9.- us) a month + which he will eventually own.

He told me he has 3 "barones" + 2 girls
(one of which is married) between the ages of
10 + 26, who are all going to school or
studying, + that they can do so because all
education is free; that they don't have to
shoe-shine or pimp or prostitute themselves.
He was eloquent, in a simple way, about
the new life the Revolution had brought
to Cuba — free medication, free education,
equality of men + women, literacy for all,
no drugs or prostitution, disappearance of racism.
He admitted that there was always a bad
egg or two, but he was enthusiastic about
what is happening in Cuba because every-
body — despite certain material shortages, com-
ing a good life.

Anton + I Spent 3 hours at the
beach — a long sandy beach with few
people. The ocean was heavenly, reflecting
the play of the clouds in many hues
of blue + green. The water was warm

+ Caressed the skin with velvet gloves. There was a strong wind from the sea which produced enjoyable waves + cooled us down - but, alas, it also deceived us about the intensity of the sun (especially between 1 + 4 pm!), so that yesterday I too realized I had had too much sun, my skin turning red (but not, fortunately, blistering), + Anton felt definitely sick. We had ordered the taxi for 4 pm to pick us up + return us to the city. The driver, with whom we had become quite friendly on the way out, stopped for us at the "Castilio de Morro" from where one has a fine view of the magnificent bay around which Havana is built. A picture to make the heart take wing! We then made a detour through the old part of the city, along the Paseo del Prado, + I realized there is a good deal of the old colonial Havana which is being restored. I plan to spend an afternoon there.

We returned to the Havana Hotel about

5pm. I changed rooms from the 6th to the 12th floor in order to get a little further away from the street noise + to have a better view of the sea. The view from the hotel room is indeed magnificent - the picturesque old city with its palatial domes + spires to the right, the swell + sweep of the bay, + the glittering ocean rolled out over the edge of the horizon. Mornings I keep the curtains closed because the room faces northeast + the sun would make life intolerable (air-conditioning being more of a dream than a reality in this hotel), but in the afternoon the sun is on the other side of the building + a strong, fresh breeze blows in from the sea which, with the glass doors wide open (as out on the large balcony) makes life ecstasy!

There was time only to effect the room change + to have dinner (a routine

on which I want to comment later) before
Anton + I were off to the Teatro Nacional
to see a performance of "Molinos de Viento".
In the meantime we had met up with
two ITI delegates from Australia (Tom +
Alison), + the four of us hired a taxi
which took us the 3 km (approx.) to the
theatre where I was to be met by a rep.
from the Cuban ITI. No one was there
to meet me, + it took some effort to
locate the president of the Cuban ITI (who
claimed he'd been looking for me all
day) to get a couple of good seats for
Anton + myself.

The play was a delight because
it fulfilled so easily + energetically the old
(+ still valid) dictum that theatre (+ all
art) must at once + the same time entertain
its audience + instruct them (though that
need not take on didactic a form as it

did in "Molinos de Viento"). The plot involves a High School where all is not as it should be. The director is content with a facade of achievement, but when 3 of the mischievous boys steal a bundle of exam questions the teachers revolt + the Director is forced into an investigation that slowly works its way through shame + deceit to a realization that everyone is responsible for the moral (+ pedagogic) breakdown at the school, the need for cooperation in a spirit of love + for an unwavering commitment to truth. In Canada such a play would be laughed out of court as propaganda + romantic idealism. It testifies to the health + sanity (+, yes, superiority!) of Cuban Society that such a play, first of all, can be produced with such vitality, flinty fast-paced fluidity + splendid acting +, secondly, that it is received with such wild enthusiasm.

by Cuban audiences. I found it a moving
play that poured oil into the flickering flame
of hope in my heart for a better world
to come.

After the 2½ hour non-stop perform-
ance, which severely strained my knowledge
of Spanish. I enjoyed the ¾ hr walk
back to the hotel (without being molested
by anyone). I read a little + turned in
before I am

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Friday, May 29 - 8^{am}

At this time of the morning the heat is still bearable. At 10^{am}, when a group of us are going to the beach at Santa Maria, it'll be broiling, sapping one's energies. Havana is a Sweatbox during the summer months. I haven't been able to get an exact temperature reading. Estimates by Cubans I've asked range between $32^{\circ} + 37^{\circ}\text{C}$. The humidity is high, for this is the rainy season - except that no rain has fallen so far. Here too the evidence for the global changes of climate we are witnessing is not lacking.

I must get back to Wednesday morning when the Cuban ITI finally made contact with me in the form of Freddy Ariles, a playwright in his mid-fifties (I guess), author of a number of

published plays (e.g. "Dus in Dus"). He's a slim person, only slightly shorter than I, with quick dark eyes that are both shy + intelligent. Not a simple personality, I knew at once, before I found out he was married twice + now lives with a woman who has two teen-age children + is, in fact, one of the Cuban organizers of the ITI Congress. Freddy (named after a Cuban disc-jockey his mother liked!) is an introvert who is not adept in the practical aspects of life — e.g. he told me he has never driven a car, + never would, because he lacks any sense of direction or orientation. But he is proving to be an extremely useful guide to me through whom I'm forming entrance to Cuban theatre, both physically + intellectually, by short-cuts.

On Wednesday morning we discussed what it was I wanted to get out of my Cuban visit, talked about theatres-playrights, + then went to get tickets

at the Hotel Capri. He managed to get me official status at the Theatre Festival Casan ("Esenes") in order to facilitate entrance to the various events. He also arranged for me to go out with his company to see a performance of a Russian play in a factory ^{near} the outskirts of Habana.

Guillermo picked me up at 2:40 pm (25 mins late in Cuban style — in that respect Foeddy, as I said to an Australian friend, is "as Cuban as a Kangaroo": he is always absolutely on time, by the second!), that is Guillermo (a member of the company) came to the hotel + we took a tourist taxi which brought us to the Empresa Plásticos Habana (a plastics factory near the port) through the industrial area of the city which seems to be concentrated near the port. There were many merchant ships in the harbor + Guillermo told me, in response to questions, that the US blockade

is no longer as effective as it was (though
Freddy told me later that the N.S. still use
every means to sabotage Cuban trade: they
put pressure on foreign companies + governments
to cancel contracts they have made to sell Cuba
vital materials for building or machines for
agriculture etc.). There were small red flags
stuck in the ground along the driveway to
the theatre which turned out to be essentially
a large cafeteria style room, just as shabby
as you might find them in a Canadian
factory. There they had set up a long table
+ chairs, as though for a committee meet-
ing, one short end with its back to a
green wall, + around this "set" on three
sides, with barely four feet of space were
rows of chairs for the spectators.

As the performance didn't start till
3³⁰ pm I had a chat with the actors out-
side who told me they were all on salary
+ very happy with the work they were

getting. They also readily agreed with me that such security was a threat to their dynamics as actors, though I wasn't promoting our jungle (!) + they explained that their dynamics came from their contact with the audience. And I saw that contact in action!

The play was "El Premio" by the Soviet writer A. Guelman. And it was a Committee meeting — of the Party, concerning complaints of the workers of mismanagement + corruption in the running of a factory. The Game of Contention was the premium to be paid for fulfilment of the quota which, the foreman agreed, the workers had deserved because they had done better than their quota. He produced statistical evidence that the problems + snags were the consequence of incompetence on the part of the administrators. The play is a heated (in more ways than one) argument during which every point of view is heard + which is finally settled in favour of the workers by the tie-breaking

role of one of the managers whose original antagonism to the foreman is gradual changed + turned around. Throughout this two-hour, non-stop debate, the factory workers (who filled the room) were so integrated with the action that they lost the sense of this being theatre: this was their situation that was being debated, + their pride + their income that was at stake. They laughed + cursed, + since the performance was without special costumes + artificial lights, in a hall with windows open (at one point a train passed + whistled so loud + long that the actors had to stop talking) so that street noises were heard throughout, + people were coming + going in the back ground, I too became unsure that this wasn't a "real" committee meeting. All of the circumstances were diametrically opposed to the Conger's theatre to which I am accustomed, + yet it worked! I'll never forget the kitchen workers (there was a

kitchen at one end of the room) using every opportunity in between waiting, to stand in the doorway + watch the performance with rapt attention. The audience was absorbed from beginning to end + gave the actors a standing ovation. It is occasions like this that make me realize how profoundly changed this society is, + whatever the drawbacks of Cuban socialism are, it is a change for the better for the majority of Cubans.

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Saturday, May 30 — 8^{am}

Counts are definitely getting ahead of me. I'm going to have to shorten these notes, because I'm already 3 days behind — one more day + the point is lost, i.e. to register immediate impressions.

I forgot to mention a brief luncheon at "La Torre" a Restaurant at the top of the highest building in Havana (quite close to the hotel), to which I'll Sinclair, the Cultural Attache of the Can. Embassy treated Anton + I. Alas, Anton was so poorly (from the sun, he thought) that he ate little, but I enjoyed a plate of cama-rones + an ensalada mixta. I'll is a jolly person, a little heavily built, but full of enthusiasm for the arts. We had a lively discussion + I gleaned some information from her 8 months in Cuba. But time was short since I had agreed to

to meet Guillermo at the hotel to go to see "El Premio".

In the evening I went to see an anniversary production of Maria Antonia by Eugenio H. Espinosa. An interesting play whose "Carmen" plot was interwoven with the mystical - superstitious beliefs + practices of the past of certain African people of the island. (Actually the Ymaka (?) people, the language of Wole Soyinka whose works have just been published in Spanish + who came to launch his book with a speech at 6 pm on Thursday) The mythic dimension is what makes this play come alive, + the director had wisely emphasized these elements in the set + in the impressive choreography of several dances + chants. The foreground plot of the passionate beautiful negress who poisons her lover for infidelity + is then stabbed to death by another lover for the same reason, is thin, + it wasn't helped by

the fact that the parts were played by the same actors who played them in the premiere production 20 years ago. Two decades tend to soften the contours of passion — to say nothing of the contours of bodies, in this case particularly that of the leading actress who had at least one superfluous pound of flesh to show for every year that had passed since the original production. The theatre is not the place for homage productions. —

Thursday began as usual with notes, picking up tickets at the Capri. At 10am Freddy picked me up for a tour of Old Havana. I didn't realize so much of Colonial Havana had survived, + the Cubans are extremely busy trying to restore some of it. Many buildings are already in fine shape, reflecting the wealth of those days. There are cobble streets, lovely patios, balustraded balconies (in stone + iron), + charming

plazas — like the Plaza de Armas where Cuba's publishers have a fine building of colonial splendor. Alas, all the museums were closed until 2³⁰ pm + by then we were back at the hotel. But I want to remember two trees which I learnt are peculiar to Cuba — the palma real, the Royal palm, a very tall (60-100 ft?) palm with a completely smooth bark that barely shows the sections of growth + a graceful thickening in the middle that tapers off in both directions like an Arabic column; + the wide-branched Seiba tree, for which Freddy knew no English term, a fine specimen of which represents a third generation outside the temple, the place where the first Catholic Mass was read by the Spaniards. We walked along the water so that I could get a clear visual impression of the splendid (+ very busy) harbor which extends into the island in the shape of a

bagpipe — a large Sack connected to the sea by a long + narrow neck guarded on each side by heavy fortifications (El Castillo del Morro on one side, El Castillo de la Punta on the other).

At 4 pm we walked to the Casa de las Americas. I should say that walking is extremely strenuous in these temperatures + in this humidity, + Freddy sweats as profusely as I do. How he manages to cope with the strong (small) cups of coffee which he needs at regular intervals I don't know. I restrict myself to water — or the occasional mojita, a rum-drink with a twig of some mint like herb in it. Had one during the morning walk in the Bodega where Hemingway used to drink it. By the way, the Cubans indulge a perfectly & my Hemingway cult. I have heard + seen his name a hundred times to sell certain drinks

+ bars (in particular "El Floridita"). I am disappointed that they should stoop to such banal tourist promotion. Even the taxi driver told me of his 92-year old friend, a fisherman who used to take Hemingway out + who inspired "The Old Man + the Sea". — The visit to the Casa de las Americas was ineffectual since the Theatre Festival people were in session + someone was holding forth about Inguay. I caught up with Isidora Aguirre who apologized profusely for not having called back to meet with me. She is beset with people + old friends, + we agreed to get together in Montreal.

At 6pm we went to attend Soyinka's book launching. He is an intelligent person who handles himself well under questioning. Understandably he has a high opinion of African traditions, + an extremely sceptical one of those of the former white colonial masters. I must

make a point of reading his plays carefully to see if I can get access to these African traditions. I must not allow myself to be put off by his vanity or his tendency to pontificate. The public makes it extremely difficult to wear the Nobel laurels with grace.

At 9 pm Freddy + I went to see a play at the "Teatro Nacional" — "El Gato de Limón" ... — not a play as much as a romp about the anomalies + mis-managements in a Socialist sugar factory. The audience enjoyed themselves hugely, but it was shallow + silly, + after a 1/2 hr I lost interest. Freddy felt the same way. So we left at intermission. I caught a Congress bus back to the hotel + managed, for once, to get to bed (but not to sleep) before midnight.

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Saturday 11 am

I am back from the Palacio de las Convenciones where I went to register.

I missed the bus, but got a lift from Ricardo Garal who had Ignacio Fontón in the car. Ricardo is the director of the puppet theatre where I saw El Caballito Jorobadito yesterday which Ignacio had rewritten from a Russian original by P. Ershov. I liked the production a lot. It combined shadow puppets with rod puppets + was well-paced + imaginatively designed. Simple means were used to good effect — for instance, three strips of some white, semitransparent material, were raised + lowered horizontally to give a plastic sensation of a sea in motion (on which a whale was rocked). But I thought the play patronized children by stripping the story to the barest minimum necessary to tell of the adventures of the little boy. Symbolical figures appear (like the princess

of the Moon), but their essential relation to the story is left in limbo — so that one feels if they'd been something else (i.e. if the princess had instead been a prince from Mars) it would make little difference. Ignacio confessed to (over-)simplifying the story + said how difficult it was to write a play to appeal to children of different ages. =
Freddy is downstairs in the lobby + we're off on another day's adventures. =

x

P.S. I mentioned Innok as an example of such a play. It was only then that they learnt I was the author of Innok — whereupon they virtually exploded with enthusiasm + admiration, pumping my hand ecstatically. I had no idea they even knew the play. Now I learnt they had already translated it from the French translation! They are planning a production + we're to meet about it tomorrow. x

Sunday, May 31, 9am

The Congress begins tonight + casts its shadow well ahead. I was at breakfast just after 7am (the time the restaurant opens), but as I was leaving David Levine from N.Y. came + engaged me in an informational session. He has a curious status with the Playwrights Committee. Since we have neither the right nor any need to appoint a "legal adviser." He owns the position more to the nepotistic machinations of certain Committee members (Haim, Heller + Soto) than to any real contribution he has made to the work of the Committee. — David is a "nice" chap, but his attitudes are those of the wealthy Jewish New York lawyer which he is, + we were into a fight quickly when he pointed out how different Cuba was under Batista, how much more splendid this (Heller's) hotel was, + the streets in good repair, + goods in the shops. I put him in his place

by pointing out that many of these farms were not to be laid at the doorstep of Socialism but of the capitalism of his country which has done everything to break Cuba economically. "What else do you expect us to do?" he replied. "They're the enemy." To which I replied that Cubans were not the enemy of Americans, but only of the privileged + the exploiters who are responsible for so much suffering in South America. In any case, the facade of Socialism may be in need of repairs - I agreed - but the reality is that the US has much more illiteracy, ill health + poverty, even relatively speaking, than Cuba. - Anyway I didn't get away till 9 am + at 10 am I have meeting with Ex Com. So I must rush these notes.

Back to Friday. I already recorded my impressions of "El Caballito Jacobadito", the puppet play I went to see at 3 pm. In

the morning I went to the beach with
Alysson Lyssa (Australia) + Joene Lyte (DDR)
an older lady who was effusively grateful
that we took her. We only stayed a couple
of hours + I was protected by Alysson's
"12+" Suntan lotion. Gorgeous weather -
even more gorgeous views. We were met
by Cubans who wanted to practice their
English (so they said), but managed to
talk amongst ourselves too, exchanging ex-
periences + views on Cuba + Socialism.
Somehow A. asked if I had ever written
a book in German, + when I mentioned
KANADA, some people near us (I thought
they were just fasting themselves) got
up to congratulate me on the book.
They were Austrians who had read it
+ thought it excellent. Writing in Canada
may be like throwing harpoons into
a snow bank, but they seem to pass
through - as through a block hole -
+ come out the other side into the rest

of the world + at least be taken note of. —

In the evening Freddy took me to see
(at my suggestion : F. thinks I have ESP
because whenever I choose something it's
good + when he does it's poor — the luck
of the draw, I say!) El Millonario y
La Muleta in the Casa de la Comedia,
a small open-air theatre in Habana Vieja.
What a delightful experience! A total impre-
tensions comedy of errors, written by a
19th century Cuban woman who spent most
of her time in Spain — Gertrudis Avela-
neda — and performed with abandon in a
laughing Caribbean night! A well-paced farce.
I'm going to try + get a copy of it to
see if it can be translated. — What
was also wonderful to see was the neighbors-
hood kids (under ten) who apparently came
night after night, spellbound by the magic
of the theatre unfolding before their eyes.
Occasionally one of them runs across the set

(an open space in a patio surrounded by the audience on folding chairs). It was a liberating experience after all that socialist drama I've seen!

Yesterday was registration time at the Palacio de Convenciones where I was taken by Ricardo G. + Ignacio G. (see yesterday's notes). Afterwards we ^(F+J) went to Freddy's place in the centre of Old Havana where he gave me a short course on contemporary Cuban drama. He lives with his common-law wife + his two teenage children in a second-floor apartment consisting of 4 or 5 narrow (but high-ceilinged) rooms with a tiny space for him to write. He is evidently quite content with his quarters (which he owns + therefore doesn't cost him anything); they are too dingy + noisy for me — but they're better than what I've seen in other Latin American countries.

Freddy told me about the six most important contemporary playwrights (including himself) - at my request because he is a modest man): Abelardo Estorino, Nicolás Durr, Héctor Quintero, Ignacio Gutiérrez + José Brene. He outlined their plays to me + I've chosen seven I want to read + from which I shall select one or two for translations. The plays are a compromise between what Freddy judges as their best work + what I judge instinctively might interest a Canadian audience. They include "El Robo de Porcena", "Ni mm Si, ni mm No", "Las Pericas", "Contigo pan y cebolla", "Llévame a la Pelota", "Santa Camelia de la Havana Vieja", "Adriana en dos Tiempos", + "El Esquema". After I've read them I'll know better. It was certainly a very informative + fruitful session.

From F's apartment we went to the art museum. A large modern cement building

that seemed to be in some disarray + even disrepair. But, after walking up a long ramp, we came to a large room marked "Arte Cubano" which contained approx. 80-100 canvases of the 19th + 20th century. Apart from Lam (who spent most of his life in Paris but died in his native Cuba in 1982) I know none of the painters. There was some very interesting work, but so few canvases by any one painter that it was impossible to judge their importance or even discern a distinctive Cuban style. European influences were ubiquitous, but there were independent spirits too. I tried in vain to buy postcards or reproductions or to find a book about Cuban art.

There was time for a rest at the hotel before dinner + another theatre performance this time of the "Banza Nacional de Cuba".

The food in the hotel is plentiful + good, but not very sophisticated. Perhaps I am spoiled by the haute cuisine of my Cordon Bleu sweetheart. Still, I am adaptable + I would find no fault with the food. The Cubans are to be especially congratulated considering the difficulties they themselves have with the food supply.

Breakfast is between 7 + 10 ^{am} + offers large quantities of fresh fruit (oranges, grapefruit, pineapples, mangoes + bananas), boiled eggs or scrambled eggs with bacon or (sometimes) pancakes. In addition there is a long table with plates of cheese or sausage as well as different sweets + cakes. Orange + guava juice, American or Cuban coffee, yogurt etc. I usually eat a large, three-course breakfast because I skip lunch altogether (except for the luncheon with Jill Sinclair). - Dinner offers the same variety of fruit + drinks (a bottle of water or beer is included), but a larger selection of sweet cakes. There are also large numbers of

hors d'oeuvres which include tomatoes + cucumbers,
various pastos + crackers, fried bananas + plantains,
frequently an assortment of pieces of fish, cheese or
meat. In addition there is a hot meal,
^{usually 3 dishes to choose from} ~~choice of~~ fried fish or chicken, a meat stew,
once rabbit + once calamaries — with either rice
or potatoes + sometimes beans. As I say,
plentiful + solid.

At 8:15 pm Freddy picked me up at the
hotel + we went to the National Ballet
Theatre to see the Company "Danza Nacional
de Cuba" in a programme of 5 pieces of
which the first, which lasted almost a
whole hour, was by far the best:
"Lunetario" ("Stalls") in which four characters
sit next to each other watching a show
while the dancers interpret their different
interior monologues. A fascinating piece
with superb group dancing + a fine choreo-
graphy. I liked the group very much —
young, modern, inspired, though I didn't
care much for the pieces they called
"Jennival" (an unfocused piece about plants +

flowers growing) + Mandala (about Nelson M. of course) because the choreography made no sense. "Tribute" paid tribute to Caribbean music + traditions, but I found it an unnecessary descent into the commonplace. "Metamorphosis" was excellent: it didn't have anything to do with Kafka (in spite of the quote in the program), but depicted the struggle of life towards freedom + light. There was an air of biological mysteries as well as political liberation. A thoroughly enjoyable evening that convinced Freddy that my intuition (I had chosen the program from a long list of available spectacles).

Afterwards we went La Floridita, Hemingway's favorite bar to have one of his beloved daiquiris. I found it no better than any daiquiri I've had elsewhere, but I dislike such personality cults for commercial profit + I could react against it even if La Floridita offered the best daiquiri in the world. — By 1 am I was back at the hotel + watched a film with William Holden till 2 am. *

Tuesday 11^{am}

June 2

Since the start of the Congress Monday morning it's been impossible to get back to these notes. In fact, for me the Congress started on Sunday morning when the ITI EXCOM asked to see the Presidents of the Permanent Committees. The meeting was in a building in Old Havana + we were asked to wait as each of us was to appear before EXCOM in turn. I was angered by this high-handed attitude + began my appearance by calling EXCOM "arrogant". Soyinka apologized + tried to attribute the procedure to transportation difficulties. But I pointed out that we were all artists of the theatre inter pares + that all the presidents should meet with EXCOM at the same time so that they could hear what each one has to say.

about Committee Structures + rationales, instead
of being treated like suspects appearing at
a hearing to see if a crime has been
committed. But they didn't bridge + I
lambasted them for their bureaucratic
minds. Later several members of Excon
(Poland, FRO, India, etc.) congratulated me on
my outspokenness. They agreed with my criticism
but declared there was no point in ~~my~~ ^{their}
protesting because Perinetti was a dictator.
Cowards! In the end, they're putting their
own vested interest ahead of the common
good.

I'm not going to bother making a
note about the details of the Congress
because the administrative portion is a
bore: I can deal with it effectively,
but it doesn't exactly inspire me. I'm
a very practical person + impatient with
equivocation + circumlocution. Which
means that I can run a Committee in

a manner that produces results without imposing my own views. It's a matter of cutting through the verbiage + muddle that is chief product of most committees, finding the consensus + articulating it. The result is that I'm always asked to be on + chair committees, + although I've declared at the beginning of the meeting of the Playwright Committee that I'll not run for the presidency of the Board again, I am being pressured by several members to let my name stand for re-election. But I intend to stand firm for 3 reasons: (1) I've been on the Board 4 yrs + it's time to make room for other people with new ideas + energies (there are always good people out there whose talents won't develop until the incumbents move over); (2) my health requires that I reduce my commitments, + that means dropping this

kind of organizational involvement; (3) Due
definitely doesn't want me to run; my
independence + forthrightness is too much for
the mediocrities that manipulate the organiz-
ation - a mafia (the Jane Bussos -
Erica Ritters - Carol Belts + Eric Salntins
of the world that corrode the social +
intellectual fibre of any organization or
society at any level!) that I'm not pre-
pared to fight unless I have to. I'm
no Don Quixote. The best way to
relegate them to the adican is to pro-
duce works that celebrate the human spirit,
the imagination, the joy + love that
they lack! —

After the Excom hearing on
Sunday I met with Freddy to go to the
Puppet Theatre of Ricardo Jara. They
wanted to talk to me about Inook,
to find out what I wanted to do
or say with the play, how I came

to write it, + Freddy had some specific questions concerning a possible translation (one of them that caused Arlette some problems with the French translation, i.e. the gender of the son + the mom which is so unalterably the opposite of what it must be in the play — the next day, Freddy told me his wife Myra solved the problem at once for him!). The result of our 2 hour session was that the play will be translated by Freddy + that the theatre will produce it, probably early in 1988. They are hoping that I'll come in December to take part in the rehearsals. That suits me fine, since I was planning a Caribbean holiday over Christmas anyway.

Sunday eve at 7 was the official opening of the XXII. Int'l World Congress in an old Spanish Colonial Building

at the Plaza de Armas. The moral being
speeches of a series of official, an experience
~~characterized~~ by the heat. But there were two
handsome Royal palm trees in the attractive
patio where the ceremony took place. Afterwards
— after a long + sweaty wait in the
Plaza de la Cathedral — there was a per-
formance of "Las Rumbas" — an exciting
spectacle of folk dancing + singing that
have their roots in Africa. Some of the
dances were immensely energetic, + the
naked sweaty dark-skinned bodies glisten-
ing in the colored stage-lights made
a fiery tropical ~~night~~^{sky} conjured up
tribal memories long before the dawn of
historical consciousness.

After "Las Rumbas" I took an ITibus
back to the hotel + was in bed
around midnight.

*

Tuesday Noon: I give myself another ten minutes to record a memorable experience lost right (as early this morning, to be exact). In the afternoon Ignacio Jentínez took me aside + told me I was invited to a special party + show to celebrate a medal to be given to Huelo SayinRa (another one!). I immediately sensed there was something special about this invitation + decided we were going to see Fidel Castro. The discreet manner + air of the invitation as well as my guess that only Fidel could give Huelo this medal after Havana had given him the Freedom of the City the day before, gave me this idea. Well, at 8³⁰ pm a group of us were picked up in a large bus + taken to the Mella Theatre to see an agitprop piece, called "De los Días de la Guerra", performed by "El Teatro Domínguez".

It was a long combination dance + chant
that bored me because it was far too
long + monotonous — a work based on
Jose Marti's diary, (Cuba's national hero),
not the best source for a theatrical
spectacle. Afterwards I was ready to go
back to the hotel, especially as I was
beginning to develop some ariginal pain
(+ I had left my intro in the hotel
for once, because I've been quite organized
about carrying it about with me here
in Cuba). There were many delegates
from the ITI at the performance, but the
manner in which they were thimted off
confirmed my speculation + I stayed.
Soon we were admitted to the bus where
our names were checked off against a
list. By then I was sure + I was
surprised that the other people suspected
nothing. We were then taken on a criss-
cross trip through H. (like the tail of

a rabbit trying to shake a pursuing dog)
+ ended up at a large building situated
in a large landscaped garden (details were
difficult to establish in the half-dark) —
a Government reception hall where we
were all positioned for the ceremony.
And sure enough, about midnight Fidel
appeared: we stood silent while the Cuban
+ (what I took to be) the Nigerian national
anthems were played, the Minister of Culture
gave a speech, Castro presented Soyinka with
the medal, Soyinka spoke, + then the
whole party broke + milled about, the
focus being naturally Castro. Through-
out the ceremony he seemed ill
at ease + looked in various directions.
He was directly across from me (in line
with Holo who had his back to me
about halfway). He has aged more than
I have in the 20 years since I last saw

him. The face shows the strain of his particular office + responsibility as the incarnation of the hopes of so many people throughout the world. But the eyes are as clear + brilliant as ever, quickly darting between us to separate the wheat from the chaff. If he has gained a little weight + moves more heavily, his liveliness is infectious + his energy ^{seemingly} inexhaustible. He talked with us till 3³⁰ am, by which time some of us were languishing in the large leather upholstery (After failing to sleep at 2 am I'd got up before 6 am, spent the morning at the ITI General Assembly where I spoke up once more, prepared the FC meeting while others were having lunch, chaired the meeting from 2 to 6, got back to the hotel in time for a rushed dinner + then was whisked off at 8³⁰ pm).

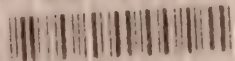
HAWAII

Feb. 2nd to 15th, 1997

*

Sunday, Feb. 2nd Lisa (+ Sara) came with us to Dewal + then dropped us off to catch our CP flight to Toronto where we were ~~boarding~~ our flight to Honolulu at 5:00pm. In the morning I skied in the forest at a "mild" - 5°C, hoping that I could say for once in my life that I'd skied in the morning + snow in the ocean in the evening. It almost came true, if you make allowance for the 5-hour time difference between EST + Hawaiian time. We landed in Honolulu at around 10³⁰ pm after a seemingly interminable ~~flight~~ ^{flight}, at least an hour in

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CANADIAN

very rough conditions (the plane shook, jolted - jounced so much that Helli was air sick & vomited!). I slept through most of it & therefore wasn't ready to go to sleep when we had settled in at the Outrigger Village Hotel before midnight. Customs & passport formalities were swift and easy, & we used a shuttle bus service for \$13 round-trip to deposit us right in front of the hotel. The room (at \$80 a night) is clean & comfortable, with two double beds, but no ocean view. We're only a hotel & a half away from the famous Waikiki beach. At ^{departing} ~~leaving~~ had the West of the flight, ~~with me~~ ^{with me} walked to the beach. Gas torches were burning that lit up the breakers as thick lines of white foam. Orion stood clearly on edge in the Southern Sky, but the Big Dipper was hidden (behind Diamond Head mountain, I think). So I put my foot in the water to establish the

link to the Hawaiian. Soon we left to bed in the morning.

Wednesday, Feb. 5, 7am (Honolulu, Outrigger Village)

Two days have passed & I haven't found time to keep any notes. The first day, Monday, might be called Orientation & Accommodation Day. We spent a good part of the day walking about the Waikiki area. The temperatures were (+ still are) around + 27°C - so our bodies had to adapt to this sudden (+ and welcome) arrival of summer ~~time~~ ^{time} for shorts & short-sleeved shirts & flappies. We had to settle our various reservations, book our flights to Kauai & Maui (at Hawaiian Islands in Honolulu), & check out our bookings (hotel / condo) for these islands with our agent in L.A. (by fax & phone). And, of course, we took our first long swim in the ocean. Ah - what a delight for all the senses to be engulfed by the soft & fresh

living Salt Sea! Considering that the place
is overwhelmed with tourists, there were remark-
ably few people swimming in the ocean. Per-
haps that's because, despite the great waves
+ the immense sand strand, the foamed under-
water is shallow + littered with broken coral
so that one fears ~~cutting~~ cutting one's knee
swimming, ~~one~~ has to go far out to get
to deeper water. I'm told it's not like
that all along Waikiki, but we won't
be here long enough to find the most
agreeable places to swim because we're
moving on today to Kauai. — In
the afternoon we took a "trolley" (an open bus)
to "Alaha Towers", a shopping market in
the downtown area. We found it interesting:
the usual souvenirs + tourist shops, pricey
but marginal — + again with remarkably few
tourists in evidence. That's been our general
impression all over Waikiki: we expected
large crowds of tourists, but people seem to
scatter so as not to become oppressive. The

land-back atmosphere that Swannits would
have helped. — At Alaha Towers we walked
into a Wyland gallery, + pretending to be
collectors, allowed ourselves to be subjected
to a fair sales pitch by a fat Irish fella
(with a "ferman" name: Shellan Heferman —
~~his~~ family dropped the "O" because the Irish
were unpopular at the time) — from the
story of Wyland's clumpfoot as a child to
his ambition to finish 100 murals by the
year 2011 (— he's at 68 now) + his moral
crusade on behalf of whales. In fact,
he seems to paint primarily whales, + though
he is technically proficient he has allow-
ed himself to become so commercialized
that much of his work doesn't rise above
the level of kitsch. An artist who sells
art ceases to be an artist. We expressed
some interest in a large print of the
tail of a whale rising from the ocean on
a monolith right under a spire (a little
too obviously) to symbolize significance (—
with that absolutely essential honesty of the

artist might have succeeded). At US 2,700.
it wasn't a steal, though most of the value
was in the black lacquered frame which Sui-
lan (+ the director, Robert) kept in polishing
personally to convey to us their reverence
for art (spell: M-O-N-E-Y). When we left to
think it was, we were offered a discount +
a private meeting with the artist (at age 40
with still an illustrious commercial career
ahead). — The huge Cruise Ocean⁽¹⁾
was berthed at Aloha Towers. Incredible!
A floating city more than a ship. We
were told a passage for a 3-months wal-
tun starts at \$150,000 + goes up to \$750,000!
Who can afford to spend that kind of
money? We live in a world run by crooks!
— In the evening we treated ourselves to
a delicious fish meal at Scott's Restaurant
at the Aloha Towers. Shared an order of
coral cakes for Hors d'oeuvre. A etc
+ an exquisitely delicious Ahi fish (2 1/2 half
raw) with rice. A had a glass of wine, + 2 two

bottles of beer. And we shared a dessert:
more a cheese cake (delicious). The bill was
unfortunately quite exquisite too: US \$ 77.00.
With the tip the meal came to \$100. —
Canadian — twice what I might have cost back
home. — Just heard on the news that
the jury in the O. J. Simpson case has
found O. J. 'responsible' for the murders of
which the criminal trial found him 'not
guilty'! What a rare demonstration of the
basic injustice in America's justice system!
There is absolutely not a shred of doubt
in my mind that Simpson committed the
murders of which he stands accused. But
in the U.S. everything is a function of
money, even justice. Simpson was acquitted
because he could afford a team of shyster
lawyers who were able to exploit the deeply
seated racism in U.S. society. Now he'll
pay back a few of the millions of dollars
he has made from the publicity he garnered
as a result of his murders + the TV trial
(a book, endorsements, etc.), + he goes free.

What a mockery of justice! And always
at the expense of ordinary people who are dup-
ed into believing they live in a fair, just
& free society. I now know what makes me
more angry: their self-indulgent glibness or
the cynical brutality & shamelessness of their
exploiters! —

*

Friday, Feb. 7

Jan - Unlinc
Shores, Kansas

Holidays for us are never times of relax-
ation as much as opportunities to satisfy
our more exotic appetites. We haven't
sat still for more than an hour since we
got off the CP plane — except while I
waited for A. to turn up for breakfast.
So I'm far behind events in my
notes when I wrote my notes on Wednesday
(as it really only 3 days ago) in Hono-
lulu, I was about to record my impression
of our visit the previous day to the Polynesian

Cultural Centre when A. came down for
his "Crack 'n' Egg" breakfast (2 strips of
bacon, scrambled egg, toast + jam at \$2.49).
That ended my note-taking for that
day. And since they were taken on the
move. Back to Thursday, Feb. 6 + our
visit to the Polynesian Centre.

We were to be picked up at the Sheraton
Airsterminal at 11.30 am. There was a mael-
of people, different times leaving from the
same place at the same time, + much con-
fusion. A poorly organized affair. Al-
though I consulted the head hunkie —
a woman sheathed in a long white
dress with green flowers (a type of Mother
Hubbard encasing the missionaries with
their perverse anti-sexual obsessions fostered
on the natives — several times to deter-
mine which group we belonged to
in the end we were the only couple left
behind + a minibuss had to be summon-
ed to catch up with one of the buses.

(#509) driven by a jolly dark-skinned fellow
who called himself Conson Kong. After
a short stop for drinks + a snack (an
opportunity especially welcome by the Japanese
whose main concern as tourists everywhere
seems to be to go shopping + to take pic-
tures of themselves), we arrived at the
Center a little after 1:30 pm. The Center
is dedicated to the preservation of the
native cultures of the Polynesian islands
+ is operated by the Maunaloa Boyhood
Society - ironically, because it
was the Christian missionaries that have
seen to it that nothing has remained of the
native cultures of these islands - except
a tired hula-hula tourist attraction.
It was inevitable that the priests + min-
isters of a lachrymose + whimpering, breast-
beating, woe-begone religion such as
Christianism should do everything in its
power to stamp out a culture devoted to
the celebration of beauty, nature + joy!



There pleading poverty to the natives has not prevented
them from acquiring the land. 80% of Kauai (where
I am writing this), for instance, is owned by twelve

rich families - all descendants of missionaries! Of the missionaries have not entirely succeeded in eradicating the joy of life here. It is because they were defeated by the ubiquitous joy of nature - the incredible beauty of the volcanic mountains, the lush vegetation with its glimmering + whispering palm trees, the multitude of bushes - trees flowering in all colors, the mild climate (always between $22 + 30^{\circ}\text{C}$!) + the ocean everywhere, teeming with dolphins, sharks, turtles + myriads of beautiful tropical fish. Something of the spirit of that benign + joyous nature is still palpable in some of the customs + dances we witnessed at the Polynesian Centre, commercialized as it is.

The Centre consists of acres of an elaborately landscaped garden with canals dividing them into quasi-islands where six South Pacific islands display some of their traditional crafts - arts, community buildings + houses. Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Tahiti, + Aotearoa (New Zealand). It was all very colorful + friendly as we moved from one culture to another. Following various performances

that included a well tattooed Samoan chief who made + played with fire; a splendid pageantry on various rafts acting out some ancient legend involving the fire goddess Pele. Complex drum rhythms played by Fijians, etc. I thought I detected some interesting differences between the islands (a more gentle air among the Tahitians as compared to the Fijians) but it was all too brief + tantalizing for tourist consumption to draw any, even tentative conclusion. One became aware that among these happy people warfare + killings were not unknown (Remember the Fijians if you entered the Chief's abode by the wrong door - you were immediately clubbed to death, no questions asked!) And there was always the threat of volcanic eruptions + hurricanes that needed from time to time to shake morale among the islanders. Yet the overall impression of these cultures is one of a profound + serene spirituality. Though I suspect their darker sides have been lamely pointed out by closure + greedy promoters. These impressions were confirmed by a spectacular theatrical presentation at 8 pm in a large amphitheatre that most sent

Coliseum - 3,000 people. All the islands performing
dances that included "O Ali'e No'e", danced with
split bamboo (pu ili) by men & women &
two men, enjoy long feated like kings
(Hawaii), Ngatahi Ogo 'O E Nafa' an acrobat
performance on drums (Tonga), Titi
Tora, a stick dance involving very quick reflexes
to teach us of life's constant surprises (New Zea-
land); Rande, a fan dance expressing grati-
tude for the beauty of the land (Fiji); "Ole'a
Amui", a joyful wedding celebration (Tahiti);
'Fa'atamapati', an energetic & rhythmic Hap dance
by young men (Samoa); and at least a dozen
more ending in a rousing display of fire
& water (fountains) to round out a rich afternoon
& evening. - But between the Spectacle
("Horizons") & the afternoon events, we had
dinner - a "luau", a special native feast with
various ceremonial introductions in colorful
costumes, including the removal from an "uke
foumou" (actually a 2 ft deep, 4 ft square
pit) of two pigs cooked on fire-heated lava
stones (which retain heat for 12 hours & more)
under layers of banana leaves. There was

fruit juice (no alcohol! Probably because it's
all organized by missionaries), salads, sweet
potatoes, chicken, fish, & of course the cooked pig
(shaved). It wasn't a gourmet meal, but
there was lots of it (buffet-style) & it was
made more enjoyable by songs & dances per-
formed on stage in the large open hall where
about 500 of us ate. The dinner started at 5 pm.
At 7 pm, we left to see the Imax film: "The
Living Sea". Marvellous photos of the sea, but the film re-
mains too fragmentary in a way. Its makers
were defeated by the immensity of the oceans,
really a single body of water so vast that
I came away feeling by the conviction
that troubles if we continue to con-
taminate this planet, the sea will not succumb
& will regenerate itself after we are gone.

AIRPORT WAIKIKI EXPRESS
720 Iwilei Road, Suite 101
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

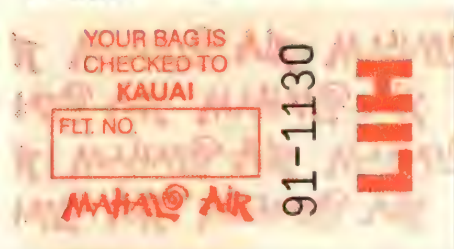
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*
The next day, Feb. 5, we
took the Airport Waikiki Express
to catch our flight with
Mahalo ("Thank-you") Air-
lines at 11:45 am, & we
flew over that vast blue

ocean to Kauai — perhaps the most beautiful
to the best tourist-ridden
of the islands. —



Tuesday, Feb. 11 / 8am / Island Valley Resort /
Maui

Yesterday we transferred from Kauai
here to Maui. It took the last part of
the day. We took a walk to the Spouting
Horn before we left, but the rest of the
morning was taken up packing. I re-
turned the car to Avis at the
Hilme airport at 11:45 am — with some
delay because they proposed to change
it to a 1969 a fallen to re-fill the tank —
drove back 3 miles to Hilme where I
refilled it at \$1.59 a gallon! (Marvellous
as these islands are all interaction with
visitors is commercialized, + those living
off them with no any deception or chicaneery
to get an extra buck!). At 12:30 noon we flew

203
GATE 74
TIME 11:30A

UH

HAWAII'S SCENIC AIRLINE

MATAIR AIR

THANKFUL TO CALL HAWAII HOME



Views were
lots of clouds —
made flying a
carnival whole
up in AHS
close be-
myself can't
in economy
in style — an
would make
up. There were
as the center
reached the
Reg. The
we. We were
some. Not much
more of a
gentler land-
to our audio

2923-30

~~204~~
414

with Mahalo to Honolulu where we changed to another flight (#414) at 2:15 pm which took us to Maui in 28 mins.

from prop on high wings. The views were spectacular, though there were lots of clouds + a fair bit of wind which made flying a little rocky at times. But we arrived whole & healthy. When I picked up our AHS car, I must be charmed the clerk because she offered me a Chrysler convertible for the same price as our economy car & same make of my style - an open red convertible that would make Clara turn green with envy. There were heavy cloud formations over the centre of the island but when we reached the west coast (on Hwy #50) the sky & the ocean were as blue as us. We immediately noticed some differences between K + M - more traffic, more of a resort feeling, calmer seas + gentler landscapes. We picked up the key to our studio

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Neighbor Islands: 1-800-277-8333

U.S. Mainland & Canada: 1-800-4-MAHALO (1-800-462-4256)

Tokyo, Japan: 03-3597-9474

Photo identification is required for all passengers over the age of 18. Boarding may be denied and the ticket/coupon confiscated if the passenger's ID does not match the name on the ticket/coupon. Note: For security reasons, all checked and unchecked articles are subject to inspection, including x-rays.

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Passengers are required to check in at the Mahalo ticket counter no later than 30 minutes prior to scheduled departure time. Reservations are subject to cancellation and passengers are not eligible for denied boarding compensation if they present themselves at the boarding gate less than 10 minutes before scheduled departure.

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ocean to Maui
YOUR BAG IS
CHECKED TO
KAUAI
FLT. NO.
MAHALO AIR
0611-16

Tuesday, Feb 11

Yesterday
have to Maui
the day. We +
Horn before
morning. We
turned the
wheel. After
delay. We
at 2:09 a gal
down back.
refilled it
as these isla
visitors is
off them with
to get an ext

in Lahaina (after having done some shopping for food at Safeways in Kaimukī - prices in restaurants are so horrendous that it'd bankrupt us if we went eating out all the time). We rented a condo in Kāhā + here in Maui so that we could prepare some simple meals for ourselves) + drove straight to Kāhā. By 5³⁰pm, as the light was beginning to fade, we were installed in our new quarters - a room with a fantastic view! Room # 707 with only sand beach, palm trees, the ocean + in the distance the island of Mōlo-Kai! The facilities (despite the higher price at \$110 per night) are less generous than in our condo (#105) in Kūia Shores, but we're on vacation + we have all we need - It's time now to turn back + try to catch up in my notes about our stay in Kāhā.

And so back to Wednesday, Feb. 5 - the day we flew at 12³⁰pm via Mahalo Air to Kāhā. A smooth flight with splendid views, some of which I photographed. There was some confusion when we arrived

because the white envelope that was supposed to be waiting for us at Avis wasn't there so we drove to "Kūia Shores", found the janitor who, in turn, called the Real Estate Co. where someone authorized him to let us into our condo where the key + everything else was waiting for us. We occupied condo #105 with ocean view, a 1 bedroom apartment with an extremely well appointed kitchen, large sitting room + balcony right by the side of a lovely lava-encrusted beach where giant turtles come joy-riding the waves every morning. There were a few houses on the promontory across from us, but we never saw anyone (except our neighbors occasionally). It was like having a private beach because there was enough of a strip of sand for us to sit + swim. After unpacking + settling in around 4pm, we drove up to Spouting Horn where a guy (local) called Doyle gave us some tips about what to see + where to eat reasonably. We watch the water spout from a clack of lava, forced by the surf

through channels in the porous lava. It appears that a century ago the spot was more massive + the resulting sea water spray damaged the nearby Sufas Cave. So the Chinese workers were ordered to clear it up (according to Doyle, a couple of Chinese were killed in the event), + to dig a "spouting basin" - essentially a single eruption of sea water following a strong enough wave - at all that is left. We relaxed for the evening + turned in at around 10pm.

Wednesday, Feb 12 - Kaneohe - Valley Isle Road

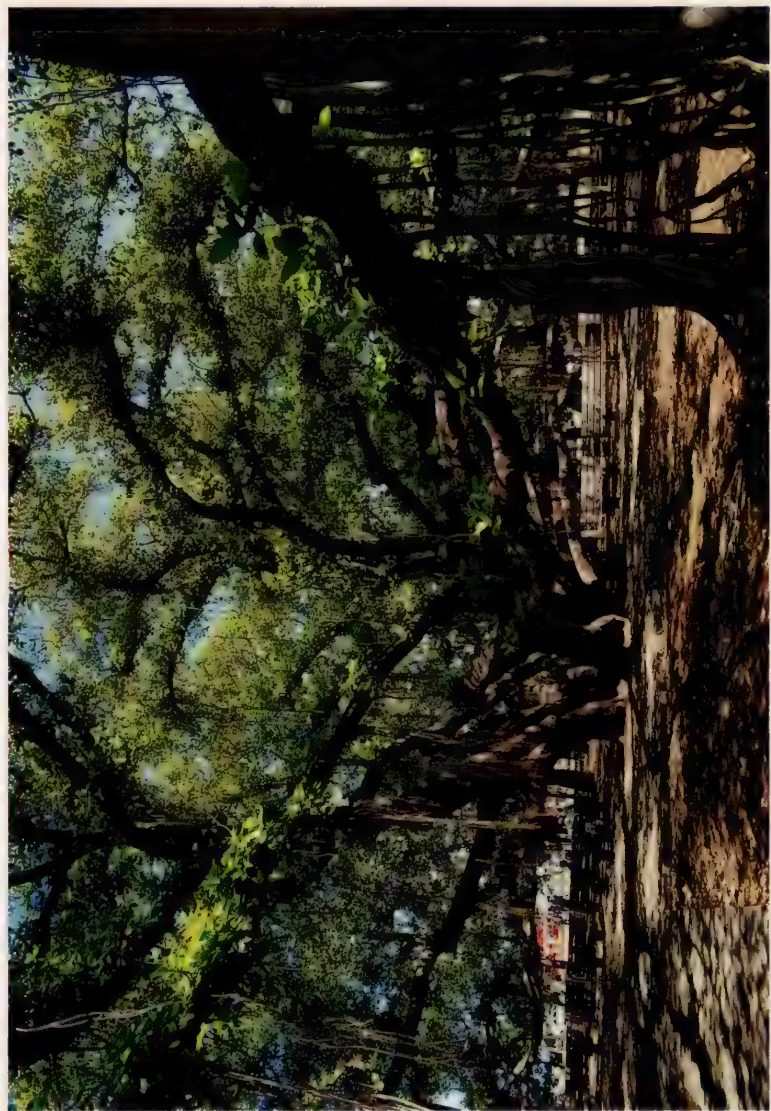
Yesterday around 10am, we set out to drive around the northern shore of Maui. Our first stop was at Kapalua Beach, supposedly "the most beautiful beach in the U.S." Well, it's picture-postcard pretty, but not any more than dozens of beaches we've seen on Hawaii - it has nothing on P. beaches on Kauai. We swam at Kapalua, thoroughly enjoying the fresh silky water -

the tangy waves. We continued on our increasingly winding road, stopping from time to time to admire (i.e. photograph) some beach-taking vistas, as we reached (near Hanalei) some of Sufas' notes on the waves - a marvellous spot that I'd take up later. I a couple of decades - young - sharing such intimacy with the sea, becoming part of the fire that makes it ceaselessly, what a spiritual thrill. Perhaps the whole experience something of this: as I'm watching this in the gallery of our minds, I can see several groups of whales breaching ("That's the blow!") + breaching! The sea is calm this morning + we're seeing a lot more whales than we've ever seen before. One gets a sense that they're playing in the water, enjoying the feel + the movement, their intimacy with the ocean - having a "shab of a time" - The landscape of this island seems to be very diverse. We passed through fields of pineapple plantations, tropical forests, + rocky areas with sparse vegetation so that I was reminded of Newfoundland or Scotland - but

for the temperatures. The road seemed to be a
State Highway just past Hounkalam - became
a narrow, often single-lane road that was
quite bumpy - often created situations in
which we (as those meeting us from the op-
posite direction) had to back up to find
a widening in the road so that we could
pass. We stopped to drink fresh coconut
milk (& take the nut home to eat -
43) - & a very deliciously sweet
pineapple (45) - large & juicy (we
just ate 1/2 of it for breakfast). The
road was not only narrow but also exten-
sively empty so that our progress was slow.
Especially as we stopped frequently. It
clouded up in the Kalia Kuloa area
where we stopped at the Swarth Tropical
Garden & saw an exotic & magnificent
blue flower for the first time - a jade
plant - a rare plant indeed, which I think
I saw in Singapore. - When we reached
Hy 30 to turn South we found it blocked
by police because of an accident. We were

re-routed to Hy 300, only to find it blocked
by police because of an accident (in
fact the cruisers over took us, blue lights
flashing & sirens wailing, to direct the
traffic). The result was a slow, often a
Bumper-to-bumper crawl, down through
lots of traffic. We stopped in Lahoma,
drove along Front Street past all the little
shops, & paid a visit to the world's
largest Banyan tree, a truly magnificent
specimen (quite different from the one we
saw & photographed in Santa Barbara,
which was a single, main trunk with
branches spreading to create a large
umbrella of foliage) which in a mere
150 years had spread to take up the
whole Town Square; its branches broke
down into thick trunks at distances of
about 20 - 40 ft from the main trunk
wherever they touched ground - a unique
family of trees. - We got back here at
about 5:30 pm. I called Clara to give her
our numbers here & to wish her well for her
trip to Calgary on Thursday. But the painful

to think of our Canadian winter months
Paradise on Earth!



The Banyan Tree at Lahaina



The Banyan Tree



Shading more than two thirds of an acre, measuring nearly one-fourth of a mile in circumference and reaching upward to a height of 60 ft., the Banyan Tree (*ficus benghalensis*) has been a Lahaina landmark for more than 12 decades. The tree has spread over the area via aerial roots which, when they reach the ground, grow into thick trunks. The Lahaina Banyan Tree is the largest in the state of Hawaii.

The Banyan Tree was planted on April 24, 1873 by William Owen Smith, Sheriff of Lahaina to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Lahaina's first Protestant Christian Mission at Lahaina which was started at the request of Queen Keopuolani, the Queen Mother and sacred wife and widow of King Kamehameha the Great. The banyan tree is a member of the fig family and originally came from India.

The symmetrical shape of the Banyan Tree was created over many years by caring members of the community. Japanese gardeners would hang large pickle jars full of water under the aerial roots which they wanted to grow as trunks. As the roots grew down, the ropes around the jars would be lengthened. Other aerial roots would be trimmed off, thus controlling the shape and symmetry of the tree.

Every evening the Banyan Tree becomes the roosting place for most of the local mynah bird population. At sundown, the tree comes alive with the raucous tunes of these birds.

The roots of the Banyan Tree thrive on brackish water. Banyan Trees grow best at sea level and are not found at higher elevations. The fruit is globular, rose red, and about one-half inch in diameter.



to think of our Canadian winter months
Paradisiacal World! —

Kuhio Shores

PARKING PASS

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339

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same as our parking
key No back home
Thursday, Feb. 6, 97

The Canyon Tree at Waimea

On our 2nd day on Kauai we decided to drive
up the Waimea Canyon. We figured it'd
be a trip of a couple of hours since it was
only 17 miles to Waimea + another 17 miles
from there to the top of the canyon. It soon
became apparent that I'd take a lot longer
to get there, there were so many splendid
scenes on the way to Waimea that we
stopped several times + had a swim on
a beach near Poakela Village. Then there were
speed limits, usually at 25 mph, and,
finally, the actual canyon road was full of
twists + turns. But it was an exciting
2 because it was Mark Twain who called

Waimea Canyon the "Grand Canyon of Hawaii" and indeed there are places where it resembles the actual Grand Canyon in Arizona. But the comparison doesn't do Waimea justice because ^{it is} less majestic, neither as deep nor as extensive as the G.C., + it is a geological infant. The Hawaiian islands were formed by volcanic action from the sea floor about 6 1/2 million years ago - took another 5 million years to reach its present shape (although the volcano on Hawaii itself still adds land to the island by repeated eruptions + a constant lava flow). The Waimea ^{canon}, unlike the G.C., is not an open look of the evolution of life; there are no forests on these islands. But the Waimea Canyons have their own character: if occasionally the canyons have washed parts of the slopes clear of vegetation - exposed the red earth (corundum?) in layers reminiscent of the G.C., most of the rifts are filled with tropical grass, shrubs + trees, + exude an air of mystery, quiet, serene. They often developed into valleys

running straight into the sea - offer breathtaking vistas 4,000 ft down a from valley into the blue sea separated from the land by the white foam of a vigorous surf - and as we saw (a 2 photographs) from Kalahele Lookout, the Northern-most point of the canyon road that offers a glimpse of the fabulous Na Pali coast, inaccessible by any other route (except for a hiker's ~~trail~~ from Ke'e Beach) but by sea. The vistas on the road are too many to list, but from the Pale Lookout is memorable for the most grand-canyon-like view it provides. We spent most of the day on the canyon trip + then descended to the coast to drive to the Western-most point. At Muna (near a US submarine missile site) the highway ends + we drove another 7 or 8 miles on an awful dirt track full of potholes. But it was worth it because we came to the most magnificent beach we have ever seen. Polihale Beach - huge sand dunes in both directions, high dunes backing them.

decidedly, + no one else in sight! We stayed there for an hour, but looked for signs that warned against swimming because of dangerous surf, currents + a deadly undertow. Aotea was ecstatic about Polihaka; it has become a beach mask for us which no other beach so far has been able to even approximate.

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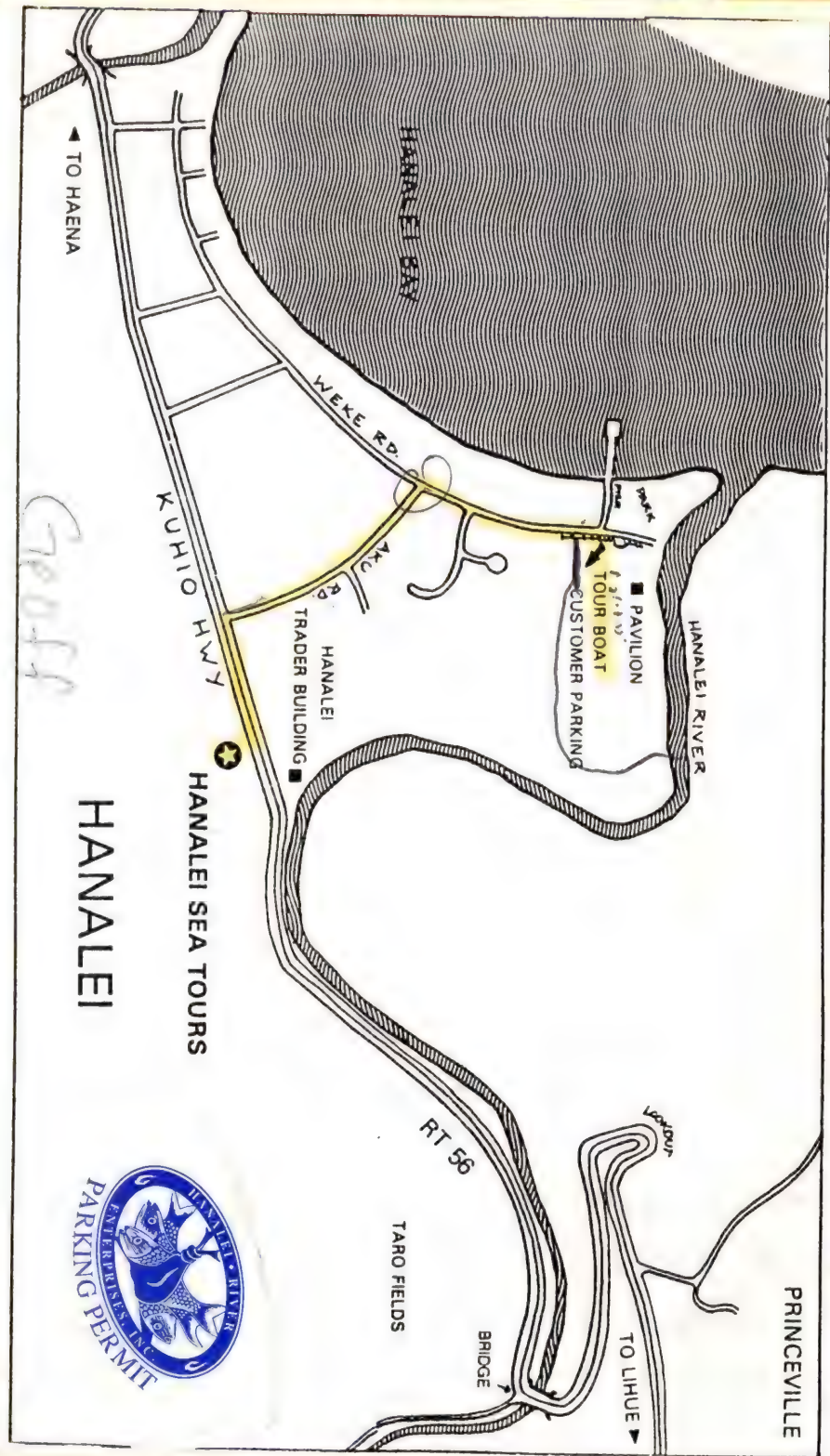
Wed, Feb 14 - Valentine's Day - 8³⁰ am - Main

With an "Aloha au ia oe" ("I love you" in Hawaiian) we began the day. I gave A. a four jump suit + A. gave me a blue silk swimsuit to celebrate the day + as a souvenir of our Hawaiian adventures which came to an end tomorrow we also decided against another entry - a drive to the Hanalei Valley crater, because it is almost certainly shrouded in clouds + rain, because we are exhausted from yesterday's trip to Aiea, + because we thought we'd spend at least one day just relaxing, swimming, reading. Of course

I'm still catching up with my notes on Kauai - so that's what I'm doing now sitting on the balcony looking out on a calm sea where once again school groups of whales (it's impossible to tell at this distance whether there are two, three or more) are cavorting. I see fins flashing, tails splashing, occasional breaching - much learning - Kauai.

Feb. 7 for our second day we booked a 4 hour raft ride with Hanalei Sea Tours. It set out around 9 am so that we could stop along the way which would take us north along the east coast + then from Kilauea west to the extreme western point accessible by road. The drive was not very inspiring till we got past Kapaa, an ugly strip of shopping malls, at least along Hwy #56. We enjoyed a number of scenic vistas + at Kilauea turned off to visit the lighthouse which is across from an existing land sanctuary on a steep rocky slope. It includes landscaped area with excellent views of the sea.

From there we drove west, but saw very little of the sea because much of the road is covered by private properties, many of them with somewhat ramshackle buildings, wooden structures, square & functional only. When we reached Haena State Park, we found ourselves suddenly in a luxuriant rain forest. We stopped at Kee Beach, an attractive but rocky cove. That is the end of the line for cars. From there a hiking trail of 12 miles leads southward along the coast towards the Na Pali Cliffs — one of the most fabulous sights on these islands. As we were soon to find out, a sprinkling of rain got us going back to Hanalei where, in any case, we were expected to report at 1 pm for our canoe. And we did indeed go out to sea in a rubber ^{dinghy} ~~canoe~~, with two outboard motors — not the most comfortable way to travel since there was only small ^{creek} ~~cove~~ at the back that seated two (as there at a pond). Aboard + another woman, the rest of us half stood, half leaned against the rubber ^{lute} ~~lute~~ sides of the craft. But oh — the sights we saw! The Na Pali Cliffs are



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stunning 1 Sheer green cliffs 2-3.000 ft into
the sea, interrupted at intervals by deep
valleys, often with high waterfalls, at
the end of one of which (Kalahari lake
out) we had looked down to the sea, not
knowing that the view in the opposite direc-
tion would be even more breathtaking.
The only cloud in the blue sky of occasion
was indeed a large cloud drifting overhead
with us - making some shots impossible
because the movement of the boat called
for a higher speed exposure than my 100ASA film
would allow. But, in any case, the images of
the Na Pali cliffs are permanently engraved
in my mind. We stopped on the way back
in Lumahai Bay to snorkel, + I was
both amazed + excited by the many colorful
fish in all shapes + sizes, with extraordinary
designs, that seemed quite untroubled by
my presence + often came up close to get
a better look at this strange + clumsy
creature. Also on the way back the Captain
of the boat (Yak) gave us a taste of surfing
by running the boat at great speed directly
into 4 ft waves - a great thrill that got

our adventure planning & made this the most exciting experience for Arlette whose dream it is to ride the surf (as we will meet at a point the day before yesterday). It was dark when we returned to base when A. prepared a quick spaghetti meal. By 9³⁰ pm we were asleep. I didn't get up till 6 am. — ~~Saturday~~ ~~FEB. 8~~ at Kanai hoped out to be a bit of a waste of time. A travel agent in Lawai (not far from our Kulu



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captainrick@hawaiian.net
Reservations
800.873.5353

Shores (and) had suggested we enjoy a free breakfast at the Lawai Beach Resort in exchange for listening to a true Hawaiian Vacation presentation. No pressure, we need to purchase — and we were to get a \$75. reduction on a helicopter ride. Since A. wanted to treat me to a helicopter ride anyway, & we were curious to

Your ninety minute tour of our resort will be a no obligation, pleasant experience that you will enjoy!

You will be treated with the utmost respect at all times.

You will receive the gift you selected whether or not you purchase at Lawai Beach Resort.

You will have an enjoyable, informative tour of Vacation Ownership at Lawai Beach Resort, with no high pressure sales tactics.

8:00AM & 10:00AM presentations will include tropical juices and gourmet island coffee accompanied by a muffin and a fruit plate.

12:00 presentation will include a fresh club-style sandwich, island salad, gourmet coffee and tropical juices.

Lawai Beach Resort — Aloha Guarantee

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**"THIS IS A TIME SHARING SALES
PRESENTATION. ANY
PURCHASER HAS, UNDER THE
LAW, A SEVEN-DAY RIGHT OF
RESCISSION OF ANY TIME
SHARING SALES CONTRACT."**

hear about Time Sharing had after a near
disaster with such a plan in Vermont about
20 years ago (the promoters vanished with
the money of those who were foolish enough
to invest; we were not - despite some
very unpleasant high pressure). Well, we
were not high-pressured at home -
there was no unpleasantness. But we were
medium-pressured + we were tempted for
about \$16,000 ownership (with deal), no
scandal, of a (fairly luxurious) 1-bedroom
apartment (well appointed) for one week a
year (with an additional "free" week when
- where available) + exchangeable with
3,000 indie Condo resorts around the world
as part of a 2-million membership organiz-
ation called ~~Vacation~~ Resort C. I
We moved + we offered additional in-
centives. But in the end we turned over
To Andy who'd been so nice about 400
+ showed us around. We decided we just
didn't want to have other people decide where
we were going to stay - and we were also
suspicious of the \$16,000 (plus buying

five) annual upkeep payments. Still in fact amounts to more than we usually pay for a week's accommodation when travelling (without a car \$20,000 investment). But we were at the Lanai Resort Lili'oe at 2pm checking in, + decided it'd not been a prudent way to spend our vacation time. We went for a swim in the afternoon + relaxed by the beach. — Next day, Sunday, Feb. 9 — our last day, was our helicopter day. It had booked with Kamae Air for 12:30 pm. A group of giant turtles moved into an bay in the morning + seemed to frolic in the surf much as we did. We had a swim too before sitting out for hime airport. Our pilot was a tall, rather stiff + pedantic character called Wesson. There were 6 passengers + he had already assigned the seating on a piece of paper. Based on our weight that was disappointing because I'd got to the gate first in hopes of sitting in the front, but A. + I were assigned seats 4 + 3 respectively, which meant that

got to sit by a window at last, along with the other two passengers. We passed easperines etc on board which reduced the sound of the engine to a soft hum — though which the pilot talked to us as piped soft but colorful music (Hawaii I would've loved some Barbra Streisand instead!). The flight took us all around the island + to the side of the 5,000 ft Mount Waialeale, with over 400 inches of rain the wettest spot on earth! We flew into narrow canyons to observe a number of waterfalls + up some stunning green valleys, along the sides of the Na Pali Cliffs. There were gorgeous views + unforgettable views, + I tried to take some pictures, though the curved plastic windows + the inside reflections on them make me wonder what will come of them. To my surprise I found the hour-long flight surprisingly unexciting: one felt absolutely safe, like sitting in a soft armchair + gliding smoothly across clouds. But it was worth the US\$200 it cost. A (who treated me to this dream fulfillment)

because of the stunning views we couldn't have enjoyed any other way. — In return I treated A to a splendid dinner at Jaylands in K (just outside Hiline). We had to book early to be able to get seated + had a lovely table to ourselves in a garden setting that reminded us of English country inns. We started with a Hawaiian punch that was the most delicious punch we've ever drunk. I had alcoholic punch as well + raised our already heightened spirits further. We then shared an hors d'oeuvre of fresh shrimp (I ate most of them because A is not supposed to eat them) that were delectable. We decided to have some dry white wine (from California: "Hagne", excellent) with our fish entrees: Mahi Mahi (with an exquisite pineapple - mango sauce) for me + Ahi for A — both were most enjoyable dishes (though we agreed that Ahi is the better fish: I had it in Honolulu!). We completed the meal with a scrumptious banana pudding pie for A. +

a mixed pie for me (A's was better). We had a coupon for one free entree, but the bill still came to \$39.00. Life is not cheap here, especially us Canadians with a dollar worth less than 75¢ in the US. But we thought it was money well spent for a most delicious + satisfying meal + evening to round off our visit to Kanai, definitely our favorite Hawaiian island (of the 3 we know).

In the meantime, we've been out swimming + relaxing on a couple of nearby beaches + the one outside our studio too. I left my watch behind + that suggested to me: "A happy man does not consult his watch." But I'll consult the calendar. I've finished my Kanai notes now + it's time to move on to Maui + our activities on Wednesday + Thursday, Feb. 12 + 13. Well, we decided to go whaling on Wednesday at 11^{am}. We opted for the "America II" because it was/is a sailing boat. There were only 7 of us on the boat: a family a 5 Argentinians (from Buenos Aires): a father, his 2 daughters +

their son-to-be husbands, the father an
engineer, the rest of Hawaiian students, one of
the daughters in engineering too, the other in
psychiatry) + us. The Captain + his mate
said they'd never seen such calm seas in
winter before, + the ocean was indeed
placid. Apparently the whales prefer more
agitated waters, but we saw several groups
of whales breaching + playing quite close up
+ a powerful, moving experience that re-
minded me of seeing for the first time
lions in the wild (in Kenya): it
brought tears to my eyes. The whales didn't
make quite the same impression because
we didn't come any closer than about
a hundred yards (I was only 20 ft away
from the lions!), because Hawaiian law,
we were told, forbids boats to go any
close. The "America II" is, of course, also
motorized + we moved by the propellers
until we came close to the island of
Hawaii, at which point the wind picked
up + we hoisted the sails. How marvelous
to move across the water by the natural
force that moves the water too. It was

a great adventure that lasted a couple of
hours + was well worth the US \$50. - we
paid (2 x .95 each). I was especially affected by
the whales to whom I feel a mysterious attract-
ion. They seem to be gentle + intelligent
creatures. The Captain of the "America II" told
us that there are about 1200 whales be-
tween these islands + they are now raising
their young, teaching them their life
skills. That's what we were watching.
Amazing with what grace these large
 lumbering animals move in the ocean.
I've always been fascinated to know
by what twist of fate + circumstance
they were induced to return to the sea. I've
yet to see a convincing scientific account
of their Odyssey! — When we returned
a little after 1 pm; we walked along Front
Street + browsed in the little stores. Most of
what they sell is Ritzy + even in ABC +
E-Z does expensive — garish Hawaiian shirts, "cheap"
jewellery, + other hick-a-bore. We moved the car +
parked in the "Liberty" Stores Complex, + there

found a fine blue jump suit which I got for A.
+ she found a blue silk shirt for me. We'd
already bought some T-shirts for the girls at
"Crazy Shirts" in Honolulu. Apart from that
we stopped only for food - after he decided
that eating out was simply too expensive -
not worth it. I prepared a hearty breakfast
with scrambled eggs + pineapple, we skip
lunch; + A. prepares a simply evening meal,
usually some delicious fish as a pasta dish.
That suits us fine → Honolulu Airport

Thursday, Feb. 13, we drove to Hana, a place recommended
because it was supposed to be
unchanged from the time it was
built, + A. was very keen on
seeing it. The drive was slow
on a narrow winding road. There
were few vistas of the ocean,
but we passed through some
magnificent rain forest + past
numerous waterfalls. Unfortunately
the sky was overcast + we
passed through a number of rain
showers. There must be lots of
rain along that northeast coast.

Saturday, Feb. 15 -
12 noon. We're on
our way home
on CP flight 126,
leaving at 2:45 pm.
Couldn't get a better
connection + have
to spend 3 hours
waiting here. A.
is off to look at
the stores. I'm in
the little Chinese
garden, catching
up with my
notes. →

to account for the lush forest with lots of
tall eucalyptus, Kona + Ruker trees as well as
some large, impressive mango trees. The forest
was the most impressive part of the trip, for
Hana itself was not very interesting - consisting
largely of square wooden buildings but with
splendid flower gardens. A couple of quaint
churches (RC/St. Mary's + Lutheran?) only serve
to remind me of the destruction Christianity brought
upon these, as upon so many other people in the
world. In its missionary activity alone Christian-
ity has been a terrible plague on mankind. —
We swam in Hana Bay, though I must say
we never found a really good swimming beach
anywhere in the Hawaiian islands. Oh, you
can swim everywhere - but it's not
because of shore break waves, lots of coral +
rocky ground, + rip-currents + undertow. A. stayed
close to the beach most of the time as a result,
+ even then she took a couple of nasty tumbles.)
usually swam further away from shore + enjoyed
the vigorous + unpredictable waves. - Well, this was
one of our happiest holidays (we've had many) -
So Aloha + Mahalo, Hawaii! →

